

Remarks

The undersigned again wishes to extend his appreciation for the interview kindly extended by Examiners Christopher R. Harmon and Eugene L. Kim. During the interview, a video demonstration was conducted of a cushioning conversion machine showing a connecting assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. The video demonstrated a biasing member of the connecting assembly in action as sheet stock material was drawn between first and second rotating feed members. The video also demonstrated the manner in which the biasing mechanism is released to allow access between the feed members, as may be desired for clearing a jam.

Following the video demonstration, proposed amendments were discussed along with the prior art rejections and a new reference, Baumuller U.S. Patent No. 6,106,452. It was generally agreed that the claims as amended defined structure different from the prior art which neither disclosed nor suggested a carrier mechanism as set forth in the amended claims. Thus, claim 14 and claims 15-22 which depend therefrom, are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early indication to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP



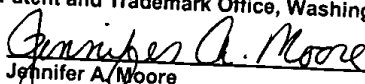
Don W. Bulson, Registration No. 28,192

1621 Euclid Avenue - 19th Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
PHONE: (216) 621-1113
FAX: (216) 621-6165

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Dated: April 21, 2003


Jennifer A. Moore

Amendments to the Claims

1-13. (Withdrawn).

14. (Currently Amended) A cushioning conversion machine comprising a conversion assembly which converts sheet stock material into a three-dimensional cushioning product, the conversion assembly including a frame and a connecting assembly, the connecting assembly comprising:

~~a frame; and~~

first and second rotating feed members, the first of which is mounted in a carrier pivotally mounted to the frame for movement between an operative position and an inoperative position; ~~and said carrier being resiliently biased for urging the first rotating member carried thereby towards the second rotating member~~

a biasing member disposed between the frame and the carrier for exerting a biasing force against the carrier when the carrier is in its operative position;

a releasable locking device which, in a locked position, resiliently holds the carrier in its operative position thereby to bias the first rotating feed member towards the second rotating feed member, and in an unlocked position allows the carrier to be pivoted from its operative position to its inoperative position to move the first rotating feed member away from the second rotating feed member.

15. (Original) A cushioning conversion machine as set forth in claim 14, wherein the carrier is pivotally connected to a pivot shaft and rotatably supports an idler shaft, the idler shaft carrying the first rotating feed member.

16. (Original) A cushioning conversion machine as set forth in claim 15, further including a driving shaft rotatably mounted to the frame and having the second rotating feed member carried thereon.

17. (Currently Amended) A cushioning conversion machine as set forth in claim 16, wherein the carrier, when in its operating position, is resiliently biased to urge the idler shaft and the first feed member carried thereon toward the driving shaft and

the second feed member carried thereon so as to apply a pinch force to stock material being fed between the feed members.

18. (Currently Amended) A cushioning conversion machine as set forth in claim 16, wherein, when the releasable locking device is in its unlocked position, the carrier is selectively adjustable in such a manner that the idler shaft is movable towards and away from the driving shaft for adjusting the distance between the first rotating feed member and the second rotating feed member.

19. (Original) A cushioning conversion machine as set forth in claim 14, further including a mounting assembly movable between a locked condition whereat the carrier may pivot about the frame over a prescribed angular range, and a released condition whereat the mounting assembly is free to pivot about the frame and carry along with it the carrier.

20. (Currently Amended) A cushioning conversion machine as set forth in claim 19, wherein the further including a biasing member is interposed between the carrier and mounting assembly for resiliently biasing the carrier relative to the mounting assembly so that, when the releasable locking device is in its locked position, the biasing member urges thereby to urge the first rotating feed member toward the second rotating feed member.

21. (Currently Amended) A cushioning conversion machine as set forth in claim ~~14~~ 20, wherein the biasing ~~spring~~ member comprises a coil spring.

22. (Currently Amended) A cushioning conversion machine as set forth in claim ~~14~~ 20, wherein the biasing ~~spring~~ member comprises a leaf spring.

23-36. (Withdrawn).